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Message Text

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S/S:MR.LUERS
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 270359

TOPOL 26 FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO

FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 8750 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
INFO ANKARA LONDON NICOSIA THESSALONIKI NATO
USCINCEUR DIA DECEMBER 9TH:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8750

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, GR
SUBJECT: GREECE WITHOUT A KING - EARLY REACTIONS

1. SUMMARY: HEAVY VOTE AGAINST MONARCHY ENLIVENED
VICOTRY CELEBRANTS WHO DANCED, PARADED, CHANTED IN
CONSTITUTION SQUARE UNTIL EARLY HOURS MONDAY MORNING.
STATEMENTS RELEASED BY PM CARAMANLIS AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS
STRESSED FAIRNESS OF REFERENDUM AND ASSERTED THAT DEMOCRACY
HAS NOW BEEN LAUNCHED ON SOLID FOUNDATION. STRONG
BALLOTING FOR PRESIDENTIAL REPUBLIC MAY HAVE BENEFICIAL
UNIFYING EFFECT OF SETTING ASIDE AGAIN CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUE OF MONARCHY IN O DENMY

REFERENDUM SO OVERWHELMINGLY
FAVORING PRESIDENTIAL REPUBLIC THAT EX-KING NO LONGER IN
POSITION TO CLAIM THAT HE STILL ENJOYS CONSIDERABLE
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FOLLOWING. AT SAME TIME VICTORY FOR REPUBLICANS ASSUAGES

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WOUNDED EGOS OF CU/NF, PASOK AND LEFTIST ADHERENTS WHO WER
FRUSTRATED AT POLLS NOVEMBER 17. WITH ONLY ONE ELECTORAL
DISTRICT REGISTERING MAJORITY VOTE FOR KING'S RETURN AND
AMNY TRADITIONALLY HARDCORE MONARCHIST DISTRICTS IN
PELEPONNESOS AND NORTH VOTING HIM DOWN, NATIONAL UNITY
MAY BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED. ALTHOUGH THE INEVITABLE
CHARGES OF INTIMIDATION AT POLLS AND OF VARIOUS FRAUDS
CIRCULATE ALONG WITH RUMORS OF UNHAPPY MONARCHIST DEPUTIES
IN NEW DEMOCRACY CONTEMPLATING BOLTING PARTY, MOST GREEKS
SEEM WELL SATISFIED WITH REFERENDUM OUTCOME. END SUMMARY.

2. CELEBRATIONS IN DOWNTOWN STREETS CONTINUED UNTIL ABOUT
0400 MONDAY WITH THOUSANDS DANCING, CHEERING, PARADING
WITH DOLL EFFIGIES OF KING, SKULL WITH CROWN AND POPULAR
POSTER OF SMALL BOY URINATING IN CROWN. GOOD-NATURED CROWD
FILLED BROAD STREET CONNECTING OMONIA SQUARE TO
CONSTITUTION SQUARE, WITH PARTY LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT
MINISTERS VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE GREETING SUPPORTERS AND
OFFERING COMMENTARY ON VOTING RESULTS. PM CARAMANLIS MADE
STATEMENT WHICH UNDERSCORED "IRREPROACHABLE MANNER" IN
WHICH REFERENDUM WAS HELD AND STRESSED THAT PEOPLE HAD
NOW EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWPOINT SO "THAT UNCERTAINTY
OVER REGIME ISSUE IS OVER ONCE AND FOR ALL." CU/NF LEADER
GEORGE MAVORS REMARKED THAT PEOPLE ALONE ARE VICTORS AND
HAVE NOW PUT AN END TO ELEMENTS OF PHOBIA, DISSENT AND
EXTRA/CONSTITUTIONAL INTERFERENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE.
ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, PASOK, NOTED THAT GREEK PEOPLE WON
THE MOST CRITICAL POLITICAL BATTLE OF THIS PERIOD UNDER
CONDITIONS OF UNCONSTRAINED EXPRESSION OF POPULAR WILL.
PAPANDREOU POINTED OUT THAT UNDER 1952 CONSTITUTION
MEMBERS OF GREEK ROYAL FAMILY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE
GREEK CITIZENSHIP AND THAT CONSTANTINE WAS PERMANENTLY
BOUND BY RESULT OF REFERENDUM. KKE S (EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR)
ISSUED SEPARATE STATEMENTS ACCLAIMING VICTORY FOR REPUBLIC
AND LABELLING MONARCHY AS OBSOLETE, FOREIGN-INSPIRED
INSTITUTION. BOTH PARTIES SAW REJECTION OF CROWNED
DEMOCRACY AS MAJOR STEP IN MARCH TOWARD PROGRESSIVE GOVERNMENT.

3. FINAL PLEBISCITE RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED BY MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR AT 0300 HOURS DECEMBER 9. PERCENTAGES AS
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REPOTED ATHENS 8729 INDICATED 69.2 PCT FOR PRESIDENTIAL
REPUBLIC, 30.8 PCT FOR CROWNED DEMOCRACY WITH ABSTENTIONS
APPROXIMATELY 26 PCT . ABSTENTION FIGURE OF OVER 1,400,000
REGISTERED VOTERS WHO DID NOT VOTE IS UNUSUALLY HIGH,
REFLECTING AS REPORTED EARLIER, VOTER APATHY, INDECISION
BECAUSE OF AMBIGUITY OVER BASIC ISSUE, ASSUMPTION OF
HEAVY VOTING AGAINST CROWNED DEMOCRACY, HENCE OUTCOME FOREGONE
CONCLUSION, AND DIFFICULTY AND COST OF TRAVEL WITH BREAK

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IN OLYMPIC AIRLINE SERVICE AND WINTER WEATHER. ONLY ONE
ELECTORAL DISTRICT, LACONIA, VOTED MAJORITY FOR KINGV
13 OTHER DISTRICTS FAVORED KING WITH MORE THAN 40 PCT ALL
FROM PELEPONNESOS OR NORTHERN GREECE; AND 29 DISTRICTS VOTED
BETWEEN 30-40 PCT FOR MONARCHY. CITIES OF ATHENS/PIRAEUS
AND THESSALONIKI GAVE MONARCHY LESS THAN 30 PCT WHILE KING
DID LEAST WELL IN CRETE WHERE HIS FOLLOWING AVERAGED ABOUT
9 PCT. ON BALANCE REPUBLICAN VOTE WAS HEAVY IN CITIES, THESSALY,
EPIRUS AND ISLANDS AND MADE STRONG INROADS ON TRADITIONAL
MONARCHIST TERRITORIES OF PELEPONNESOS, IONIAN ISLANDS
AND WESTERN MACEDONIA.

4. DECEMBER 8 PLEBISCITE, WHICH MAY WELL FULFILL PM CARAMANLIS'
PROPHECY AS THE NATION'S LAST IN A SERIES OF SIX PLEBISCITES
ON SAME ISSUE THIS CENTURY, APPEARS TO HAVE SERVED AN
OBJECTIVE OF OVERRIDING NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE
UNIFYING OF DISPARATE POLITICAL VIEWS WHILE ERODING THE
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVISION BETWEEN URAN AND RURAL AREAX.
ON THIS OCCASION CITY SUPPORTERS OF REPUBLIC WERE JOINED BY
LARGE SEGMENTS OF RURAL POPULATION. MOREOVER, AS ONE
LOCAL CORRESPONDENT ANTICIPATED,A TRIUMPH FOR UNCROWNED
DEMOCRACY HAD HAPPY CONSEQUENCY THAT EVERYONE WON SOMETHING
IN RECENT BALLOTING, THE CONSERVATIVES IN THE PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS NOVEMBER 17, AND THE OPPOSITION TO CARAMANLIS
FRUSTRATED ON THAT OCCASION, WHO COULD NOW TAKE SATISFACTION
AT RESULT OF REFERENDUM. EXTENT TO WHICH CARAMANLIS
CAN BE IDENTIFIES OF CREDITED WITH ELECTORAL SUCCESS IS
MOOT QUESTION SINCE HIS VIEWS ON MONARCHY WERE NEVER
ANNOUNCED, BUT PUBLIC GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT HIS SILENCE
INDICATED HE FAVORED REPUBLIC, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF HIS
PAST PROBLEMS WITH ROYAL FAMILY, AND THAT HE IS SATISFIED
WITH OUTCOME. ADDITIONALLY, SINCE PARTY IN POWER
MAINTAINED STRICT NEUTRALITY, ALL POLITICAL ELEMENTS
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AGREE THAT DECEMBER 8 PLEBISCITE MAY HAVE BEEN MOST HONEST
EVER HELD. THUS WHILE CAMPAIGN WAS LETHARGIC AND PUBLIC
RTHER APATHETIC THROUGHOUT, COUNTRY IS NOW IN POSITION TO
RESUME ITS COURSE TOLRESTORE DEMORATIC POLITICAL STRUCTURE,
CONTENT THAT ONE KEY HURDLE HAS BEEN OVERCOME SMOOTHLY
AND FAIRLY.
STEARNSM

UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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